CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for reducing idle-mode power dissipation in a communication device during absence of off site power, comprising:

determining whether an active radio frequency ("RF") communication channel is present at a network connection;

scanning a plurality of possible RF channels to detect whether an RF channel is present that can be made active;

placing at least one portion of the communication device into a sleep mode if an active RF channel or an RF channel that can be made active is not detected;

starting a timer set for a predetermined period if an active channel or one of the plurality of possible RF channels is not detected; and

awakening the at least one portion from sleep mode when the predetermined period has elapsed.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising detecting the restoration of offsite power while the timer is counting down the predetermined period and awakening the at least one portion from sleep mode.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one portion put into sleep mode includes main processor circuitry.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the main processor circuitry includes radio frequency communication circuitry.

5. A method for reducing idle-mode power dissipation in a communication device during absence of off site power, comprising:

determining whether an active RF communication channel is present at a network connection of the communication device;

scanning a plurality of possible RF channels to detect whether an RF channel is present that can be made active;

placing at least one portion of the communication device into sleep mode if an active RF channel or an RF channel that can be made active is not detected;

determining whether RF energy is present at the network connection using an RF energy detecting means;

awakening the at least one portion from sleep mode when RF energy is detected by the RF energy detecting means; and

scanning the plurality of possible RF channels to detect whether an RF channel is present that can be made active after awakening following detection of the presence of RF energy.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:

starting a timer set for a predetermined period if one of the plurality of possible RF channels is not detected following detection of the presence of RF energy;

placing the at least one portion of the communication device into sleep mode if an RF channel that can be made active is not detected following starting of the timer; and

awakening the at least one portion from sleep mode when the predetermined period has elapsed.

7. The method of claim 5 further comprising determining whether offsite power has been restored and awakening the at least one portion from sleep mode upon restoration of off site power.

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8. A system for reducing power consumption in a communication device having a communication network connection and using a battery backup UPS during a loss of offsite power, comprising:

a controller means coupled to the UPS for controlling operation of the UPS;

a processor means for determining whether to reduce power consumption of the communication device, said processor being coupled to the controller via a communication means; and

a switching means for placing at least one circuitry portion of the communication device in a sleep mode by interrupting power from the UPS to said at least one portion in response to a control signal from the controller.

9. The system of claim 8 further comprising an RF detecting means for determining whether RF energy is present at the network connection.

10. The system of claim 9 wherein the RF detecting means can detect the presence of RF energy while the at least one circuitry portion is in sleep mode.

11. The system of claim 8 wherein the processor includes RF communication circuitry.

12. The system of claim 9 wherein the RF detecting means and the processor share passive RF components.

13. The system of claim 8 wherein the UPS includes the switching means.

14. The system of claim 8 wherein the controller includes computing means for storing and running executable instruction code.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein the instruction code includes a timer for maintaining the at least one circuitry portion in a sleep mode for a predetermined period of time.

16. The system of claim 8 wherein the at least one circuitry portion includes the processor.

17. The system of claim 8 wherein the controller includes a monitoring means coupled to the UPS for sensing when off site AC power is present at the UPS.

18. The system of claim 8 wherein the processor means includes computing means for storing and running executable instruction code.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the executable instruction code includes a method for making the determination as to whether to place the at least one circuitry portion in sleep mode on the presence of an active communication channel.

20. The system of claim 14 wherein the instruction code includes a method for awakening the at least one circuitry portion from sleep mode upon the occurrence of a predetermined factor.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein the predetermined factor is the elapsing of a predetermined period of time measured by a timer.

22 The system of claim 20 wherein the predetermined factor includes the detection of the presence of RF energy at the network connection.